



*Sierra HOPE's mission is to promote individual dignity and support the health and well-being for at risk members of our community through compassionate services and resources*

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## **Message from Jerry**

Sierra HOPE has received a grant of \$250,000 from Dignity Health's CalAIM Homeless Health Initiative to help kick off an exciting new service in Calaveras County - The Calaveras Rural Street Health and Hospital Discharge Pilot Program. It creates a partnership with Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans Anthem and Health Net, Calaveras County Health and Human Services Agency, Mark Twain Medical Center, Valley Springs Health and Wellness Center and Sierra HOPE. The Pilot Program includes two parts:

1. Rural Street Health outreach led by Calaveras County Public Health Department. It will bring their mobile clinic van to locations in Calaveras County to provide health care services to underserved populations, particularly those who lack a permanent night-time residence. Medical and Dental care will be provided by contracted providers, with Mark Twain Medical Center providing laboratory services and Tele-Health services by Valley Springs Health and Wellness Center. \$75,750 from the Dignity Health CalAIM grant will go towards the purchase of a shower trailer which will accompany the Health Van, as well as some additional supplies.

2. The remaining funds help launch an Interim Housing for Hospital Discharge program at Sierra HOPE's Hope House. \$165,000 has been allocated to remodel a downstairs portion of the house to provide 3 bedrooms with a shared living space, kitchen and bathroom. The new beds will be available for transitional housing for Medi-Cal patients who lack housing where they can continue their recovery after discharge from the hospital. This will be a new source of revenue for Sierra Hope which will bring some badly needed financial flexibility while filling an unmet need for our community. \$9250 is also budgeted for furnishings and supplies.

CalAIM is a multiyear initiative by California to improve the health outcomes and overall well-being of Medi-Cal enrollees. Sierra HOPE will contract with Anthem and Health Net to provide the Post Hospitalization Housing and Housing Navigation Services, which are reimbursable through Medi-Cal.

Sierra HOPE also received new grants from Anthem of \$8000 to address food insecurity, of which \$6000 is being allocated to fill a gap in the Nutrition Assistance project for HIV clients, and \$2000 to offset increased costs in the Community Food Pantry.

A separate grant of \$2000 from Adventist Health Sonora is to support Housing programs and HIV case management services.

We receive grants from Government, Businesses and Private Foundations to carry out various programs. Grants are contracts that designate funds to specific programs, but don't cover all of the costs necessary to provide services. We rely on fundraising and donations to make up the difference. The budget for our fiscal year beginning July 1 is expected to bring approximately \$780,000 from grants to our community, but requires us to raise an additional \$76,000 from donations to break even.

Please help us achieve this by participating, sponsoring, or donating to our upcoming Walk for Hope, taking place on September 21, 2024 at Calaveras Big Trees State Park. Registration is now open at <https://walkforhope.flipcause.com>. See related article in this newsletter.

Jerry Cadotte  
Executive Director



At Sierra HOPE, we rely on volunteers to serve on our Board of Directors, operate our community food pantry, organize special events, and perform various tasks and chores from cleaning to repairs and maintenance around the office and our Transitional Housing site.

Unfortunately, we say farewell to another board member, longtime volunteer and former staff member. Nancy Tiffany, who wrote [a moving essay for our HandUp campaign](#) last year, has moved out of the area in her retirement and while she will continue to participate in various events as a volunteer, has decided she can no longer commit to service as a board member.

### **There are many opportunities at Sierra HOPE where you can make a difference in our community!**

- **Fundraising and Events:** Some people just love to fundraise and plan special events. If you're one of them, as you can see above, we have specific events you can help out with! Turn your passion for planning and hosting events into meaningful change; your skills can make a difference in the lives of many.
- **Food Pantry Crew and Relief Shopper.** Become a vital link in our food distribution chain! If you're up for the challenge of coordinating pickups, loading/unloading, or bagging and distributing food, we need your strength and

dedication. This is truly crucial as we will be scaling back the frequency of the food pantry as we continue to meet a growing need in our community.

- **Digital Marketing (Email/Newsletters) and social media:** If you have a flair for crafting compelling content and engaging with online communities, your creativity can amplify our impact and we could really use your help!
- **Have Truck, Willing to Haul:** Be the driving force behind our logistics, lending your vehicle and strength to transport essential supplies. Maybe you can only commit to an occasional request like when we have to move furniture for our housing program or maybe you can commit to regular runs to the food bank for grocery shopping. Your willingness to lend a hand ensures that no obstacle stands in the way of our mission - just [drop Jerry Cadotte an email](#) with your phone number and how you can help.
- **Grant Writer:** Private foundations have woken up to the fact that non profits have overhead that often isn't covered by a grant. Board member Gina Milani will be researching which foundations may offer grants that can contribute to closing our current budget gap and can also help fund future projects not presently in our grant/contract portfolio. She will need help with writing.

**Join our Board of Directors! Be part of the driving force behind our mission, shaping policies and strategies to tackle homelessness and food insecurity head-on!**  
**[Email Board Vice Chair, Eric Hernandez](#) if Interested!**

## Board Member Profiles



**Rachel Smith, Board Member**

Rachel Smith is currently a Director of Strategy and Operations at Google, bringing experience in building organizations large and small coupled with an extensive career in human resources to the Sierra Hope board. A graduate of the University of Southern California and the University of Westminster in London, Rachel has honed her knowledge in both strategic planning and organizational development. Since relocating to Sonora two years ago with her family, she has sought to connect with a mission-driven organization that aligns with her values.

"I'm thrilled to join the Sierra Hope board and lend my experience to an organization doing so much to help those



**Eric Hernandez, MBA, MHSA, Vice Chair**

Eric Hernandez is the Chief Operations Officer at the Population Health Learning Center, a new organization dedicated to catalyzing population health transformation across California. Holding a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Health Services Administration, Eric is deeply committed to building an equitable healthcare system that serves all Californians. Originally from Compton and now residing between Sacramento and Oakland with his partner, he began his impactful career as an HIV counselor, which ignited his passion for healthcare advocacy.

When asked why he joined the board, Eric said, "I am deeply passionate about

in need in our community," Rachel says. "The organization's dedication to making a difference in people's lives deeply resonates with me, and I'm excited to be a part of its positive impact."

this work and am driven by a strong desire to give back to the community. The impactful stories from my former patients and the ongoing challenges they face have motivated me to contribute in any way I can. At Sierra Hope, which serves regions with limited resources, I hope to be an added resource that helps ensure everyone receives the care and support they deserve. It's about uplifting and supporting our communities to end the stigma and ensure equitable access to essential services."



## Staff Spotlight

### Valerie Farley Housing Site Manager

In our recent newsletters we started profiling Sierra Hope staff in an effort to help you better understand the important work being done through the agency. Today we talk with Valerie Farley, Sierra Hope's Housing Site Manager.

**Q: What is your role at Sierra Hope and what led you to this career path?**

I have been working in the non-profit sector for 25 years and am presently the Housing Site Manager for Sierra Hope. I manage the HOPE House Transitional housing in Angels Camp, the 3 Permanent Supportive Housing units in Angels Camp, the 2-bedroom house in Murphys and 1 apartment in Sonora. Some of my responsibilities include overseeing the day-to-day operations of the housing site, managing client applications and occupancy, collaborating with social workers, case managers and ensuring a supportive and respectful environment for all residents.

**Q: What do you find the most rewarding about your work?**

I love working with single parents and children and seeing them grow into self-sufficiency. Helping people find the resources and services they need to succeed is incredibly rewarding. As a Housing Site Manager, I know my work is crucial in providing a stable and safe environment for these families. When they have a secure place to live, they can focus on personal development, education, and job opportunities without constantly worrying about housing. It's amazing to see how this stability can transform lives and foster a community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

**Q: What do you find the most challenging about your work?**

The lack of rentals in Calaveras County would be the #1 challenge and it doesn't seem like that's improving. Also, we find that many families come to us wanting the research work and everything to be done for them; instead of taking steps toward self-sufficiency. This orientation often stems from a history of instability and lack of support, which can erode confidence and self-efficacy. Many families have faced significant hardships that make it difficult for them to trust in their ability to succeed independently.

At Sierra Hope we strive to provide not only the necessary resources but also the encouragement and empowerment needed to help them rebuild their self-confidence. By addressing both their immediate needs and underlying challenges, we try to guide families toward a more self-reliant and hopeful future.

**Q: Tell us a little about the clients you serve and what the services you provide mean to them and their quality of life?**

Our work here touches community members in really meaningful ways. I've been working with single parents with child(ren) in our transitional house in Angels Camp, I help families find food resources, apply for services at the county health and human services, help them apply for job opportunities and prepare with mock interviews, apply for rentals, arrange transportation to medical appointments, grocery store, etc. I also help with court hearings for child custody, child support, restraining orders, and accompany clients to court.

We had a single dad come in with two kids and within six months, with our assistance, and his persistence, he landed a 3-bedroom home rental through one of Sierra Hope's faith-based partners and today he is working, and all are thriving.

Other times it takes longer, a woman was in the program for the full two years and in the last weeks of the program we able to find permanent housing and assist with the initial first months' rent and deposit which can be a real obstacle for motivated people to overcome as they return to stable housing and self-sufficiency.

**Q: What are 2-3 key pieces of information that you think everyone should know about what Sierra Hope does, and what you see are the most common misconceptions about homelessness you'd like to see corrected?**

For some reason, a lot of people believe Sierra HOPE operates a shelter, which we do not. There has been a real need for an emergency shelter in Calaveras County for many years but to date there still are no plans to build one or repurpose an existing building for such a use.

After that, the most widespread and common misconception we encounter about people who become homeless, is that people who are homeless *want* to be on the street, don't want to work, or are homeless as a result of drugs/alcohol abuse. That is a very small percentage -- no one ever considers the job loss, abusive relationships, rising rents, unexpected medical emergencies; any number of everyday things that can go wrong that lead people to lose their homes (or puts them at risk.)

The next time you see someone with a sign asking for help or work, ask yourself – do you really think they *want* to be having to hold that sign?

## PROGRAM UPDATES



### Food Pantry

Our long-standing volunteers, Steve Parkison (pictured) has been managing the food pantry for more than seven years. This program truly has been “his baby” but his health challenges have not improved to the point where he can keep up his usual pace.

Steve's commitment to the food pantry program is truly awesome – he's been training new volunteers on every aspect from Monday food shopping to filling bags to distribution each Wednesday. We have some new volunteers that are helping to fill gaps, but could still use someone who is available on Monday mornings to shop at the Food Bank in San Andreas. That person should be able to lift and help load the purchased food at the Food Bank, and unload at Sierra HOPE to stock the pantry shelves.

The Food Pantry is a 100% volunteer-run program. Funding to purchase food and necessary program supplies comes from the [Calaveras Community Foundation](#) and private donations through our [Heroes Fighting Hunger](#) campaign. We also receive donated food from the Church of Latter-Day Saints Bishop's Storehouse in Stockton and from Aria Bakery in Murphys.

## Housing Assistance Programs

We received a renewal in grant funds from HUD for our Rapid rehousing grant but face the same reality we did last year: No housing. We have money to help people, but no housing to put them in. Another reality? Rents have gone up. We recently placed a client in a 1-bedroom apartment that rented for \$1600/month – which is quite an increase over what we've seen in previous years. Most of our clients are low income and they are competing in the rental market with everybody else.

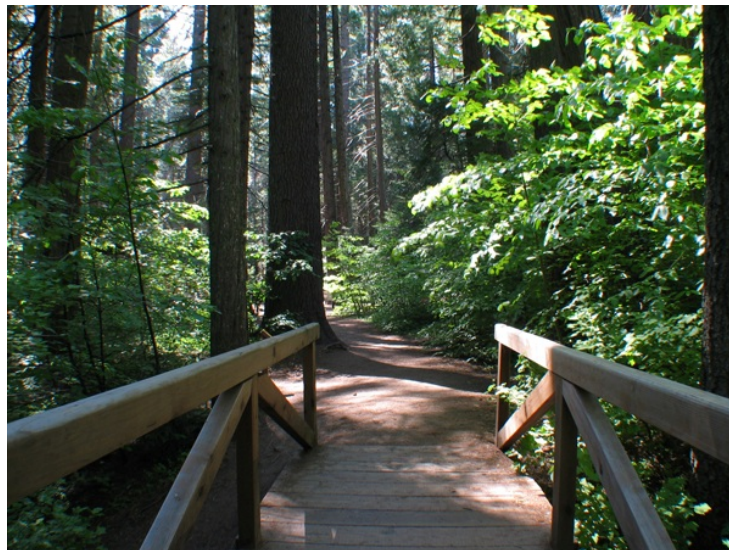
Sierra Hope has proven itself year after year to be an excellent housing partner, so if you have housing and would like to partner with Sierra Hope, you would be helping folks in our community with a hand up who truly need it with a partner you can depend on.

## Hope House (Angels Camp) Transition House

People come and go! We've recently had two successful graduations from the Transitional Housing Program and two new families have recently moved in. One bedroom will be lost temporarily during construction of the new post-hospitalization units which will begin in September.

We also acquired a van from another organization, Common Grounds who discontinued their Silver Streak transportation program and closed their doors on June 30. While we are happy to receive the van, we are really sad to see them go as they provided a much-needed service to seniors in Calaveras County and will be sorely missed. The van is equipped with a wheel chair ramp and will be a valuable asset when clients require transportation.

## It's Time to Register & Form Your Teams!



### **Our 28th Annual 2024 Walk for Hope Calaveras Big Trees State Park Saturday, September 21, 2024**

Now that we have a date for the walk; it's time to think about forming your teams for walking! New this year will be a more streamlined registration process. We have eliminated the registration fee and tried to make the registration page easier to navigate than last year -- we promise! This event is one of our key fundraisers and is always a super fun day for all participants so we hope you'll join us!

Learn more and sign up at <https://walkforhope.flipcause.com>.

## FOR INSPIRATION:

The efforts to address homelessness are as broad and varied as the problem itself. All across the U.S., the stories of people who have experienced homelessness, social workers providing vital support, leaders challenging the status quo, and partners bringing resources and guidance make up a vibrant mosaic that is rarely documented in all its complexity.

Community Solutions has partnered with filmmakers Dewi Sungai and Jason Houston (eight16creative) to tell the stories of people in six cities and counties that are part of the Built for Zero movement to solve homelessness. These are their stories, told in their own words.

The first film focuses on a program in Colorado and how this community is striving for solutions, justice, and compassion.



**Thank you all for your ongoing support and generosity! We appreciate it!**

**SUPPORT OUR WORK**



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